

For immediate release
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USIBWC COMMISSIONER DURAN ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF A LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY TASK FORCE FOR FLOOD CONTROL

Commissioner Arturo Q. Duran of the United States Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) today announced the establishment of a task force to advance Rio Grande flood control project improvements in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The USIBWC operates the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project, which includes a system of levees and floodways covering 180 river miles from Peñitas, Texas to the Gulf of Mexico. The USIBWC has developed a multi-year plan to raise and rehabilitate levees within the project.

“I look forward to working with the local community to implement improvements to the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project. That is why I am establishing a task force with the participation of community leaders. By partnering with our stakeholders, we can ensure that critical infrastructure needs are addressed,” said Duran.

The Task Force will include three committees - 1) a Legislative Committee to develop a funding strategy, 2) a Public Relations Committee to keep the community informed about Task Force activities, and 3) a Technical Committee to address specific flood control project improvements.

Commissioner Duran conducted an aerial tour of the Lower Rio Grande Flood Control Project on July 27. On July 28 at 2:00 p.m., Duran will meet with business leaders and elected officials at the Best Western Palm Aire Hotel at Expressway 83 and FM 1015 in Weslaco at a

meeting hosted by the Rio Grande Valley Partnership. At the meeting, community leaders will be asked to serve on the Task Force.

The USIBWC has assessed the structural condition of the flood control levees and developed a hydraulic model indicating areas where levees might be overtopped in the event of a large flood. The USIBWC used the results of these studies to determine priorities for rehabilitating levee segments. The agency has developed a multi-year work plan which would affect nearly 38 miles of levee at an estimated cost of \$75.2 million. Priorities include levee segments near Hidalgo, Mission, McAllen, Progreso, and between the Hidalgo-Reynosa Bridge and Retamal Dam south of Donna.

At the meeting, the Rio Grande Valley Partnership will also present Commissioner Duran with an award for his achievements in addressing issues in the Lower Rio Grande Valley including settling Mexico's longstanding Rio Grande water debt, addressing Rio Grande flood control improvements, approving a rail-truck offloading project for the McAllen Economic Development Corporation, and supporting the City of Hidalgo's Hike and Bike Trail and related levee improvements.

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